

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
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FM AMCONSUL RIO DE JANEIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6194
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AMCONSUL SAO PAULO

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E.O. 11652: PINT, BR
TAGS: PINT, BR
SUBJECT: BOMBING INCIDENTS IN MINAS GERAIS

1. DURING THE PAST MONTH, EXTREMISTS, EVIDENTLY FROM THE FAR RIGHTS, HAVE SET OFF EXPLOSIVE DEVICES TARGETED AGAINST LIBERAL CRITICS OF THE REGIME IN BELO HORIZONTE. NO PHYSICAL INJURIES HAVE RESULTED AND PROPERTY DAMAGE HAS BEEN MINIMAL.

2. THE FIRST SERIES OF BOMBING INCIDENTS BEGAN ON MARCH 28 WHEN SEVERAL HUNDRED FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF MINAS GERAIS STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED IN THE NATIONAL STUDENT OBSERVATION OF THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF A STUDENT IN THE RIO DE JANEIRO STUDENT DISTURBANCES OF 1968. DURING THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATION AND LATER ON MARCH 31 AND APRIL 7, BOMBS WERE SET OFF IN SEVERAL UNIVERSITY FACULTIES AND IN THE SOCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES OF THE CENTRAL STUDENT DIRECTORATE (DCE). PROPERTY DAMAGE WAS ESTIMATED AT ABOUT \$3,000. LEAFLETS LEFT AT THE SCENE ATTRIBUTED

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BUTED THE ACTION TO THE GRUPO ANTICOMMUNISTA OF JANUARY 28 (GAC).

3. THE SECOND SERIES OF BOMBINGS OCCURRED ON APRIL 18 DURING THE VISIT TO BELO HORIZONTE OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT FOR AMNESTY (MFPA) AND A MEETING TO COMMEMORATE THE 33RD ANNIVERSARY OF

VARGAS'S AMNESTY PROCLAMATION OF 1945. A BOMB WAS THROWN AT THE RESIDENCE OF THE MINAS PRESIDENT OF THE WOMEN'S GROUP AND A TIME BOMB WAS PLACED IN THE BATHROOM OF THE AUDITORIUM WHERE SOME 1,200 PERSONS HAD GATHERED UNDER MFPA AUSPICES. THE LATTER BOMB WAS DISARMED BY POLITICAL AND SOCIAL POLICE OFFICIALS AFTER AN ANONYMOUS TELEPHONE CALL HAD ALERTED A LOCAL TELEVISION STATION. AN ADDITIONAL BOMB CAUSED SLIGHT DAMAGE TO THE DCE PRINTING SHOP PREMISES. GAC CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL THE INCIDENTS.

4. THE MINAS BRANCH OF THE BRAZILIAN BAR ASSOCIATION WAS QUICK TO CONDEMN THE BOMBINGS AS WERE STUDENT GROUPS IN BELO. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE FEDERAL POLICE HAVE INITIATED AN INQUIRY INTO THE MATTER.

5. COMMENT: THESE INCIDENTS IN MINAS GERAIS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT IN A MANNER ALMOST IDENTICAL TO THE SERIES OF BOMBINGS IN RIO DE JANEIRO IN 1976 CONDUCTED BY RIGHT WING EXTREMISTS CALLING THEMSELVES THE BRAZILIAN ANTI-COMMUNIST ALLIANCE (AAB). AT THAT TIME, OUR ASSESSMENT WAS THAT THE AAB WAS INTERESTED IN NOT ONLY FRIGHTENING RIO LIBERALS BUT IN UNDER-MINING GEISEL'S POLICY OF DISTENCAO. THE MINAS INCIDENTS SOME ONE AND ONE HALF YEARS LATER

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PRESUMABLY HAVE A MORE MODEST OBJECTIVE OF REMINDING HIGHLY VOCAL PROONENTS OF FULL AMNESTY AND STUDENT ACTIVISM THAT HARD-CORE CONSERVATIVE OPPOSITION PERSISTS, PARTICULARLY ON SENSITIVE ISSUES SUCH AS AMNESTY -- NOTWITHSTANDING THE STATED INTENTION OF THE REGIME TO MOVE TOWARDS POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION. AS IN THE CASE OF THE AAB, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT POLICE INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE GAC WILL LEAD TO ANY CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS.

6. EMBASSY CONCURS.

DEXTER

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